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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

# Paperwork Management Council

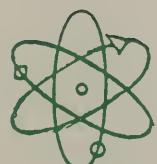
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PROGRAM REPORT - MEETING  
OF JANUARY 21, 1963

**WORKING TOGETHER  
FOR TOTAL EFFECTIVENESS  
IN PAPERWORK MANAGEMENT**

SPEAKER:

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DEPUTY ASSISTANT ARCHIVIST,  
NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS SERVICE



PAPERWORK SYSTEMS IN ACTION

## PAPERWORK MANAGEMENT COUNCIL

The Paperwork Management Council is a new U.S.D.A. organization. Everyone who works in, or is responsible for, some phase of paperwork management - anywhere in the Department of Agriculture - may consider himself a member of the Council. Through its meetings, programs and the distribution of information, the Council is designed to sharpen the interests and know-how of its members in the full range of paperwork management activities. Its broad purpose is to promote our working together for total effectiveness in paperwork management.

The Paperwork Management Council is an outgrowth of the U.S.D.A. Records Management Council, which has been in active existence since 1952. The Records Management Council has made a significant contribution to records management in the Department. The Paperwork Management Council expects to do the same thing for records, reports, forms, directives, and mail management, and to provide leadership and coordination to supporting activities, such as source data automation and work measurement. We feel there is a great need and challenge for all paperwork management practitioners in the expanding field of management systems. We want to play a part in that expansion, and we feel you do, too. The Council offers an important means for satisfying that desire.

Harold D Walker  
Chairman, U.S.D.A.  
Paperwork Management Council

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
Paperwork Management Council  
January 21, 1963Harold D. Walker - Presiding

Ladies and Gentlemen, welcome to the first meeting of the USDA Paperwork Management Council. This is the outgrowth, of course, of the Records Management Council, and represents the desire of analysts in the Department to get together and associate for greater effectiveness. I am your carryover chairman, serving until May when you have a new election and select a new Chairman. Today we have a number of people here representing the whole field of paperwork management, and management in general. I see Henry Herrell, Assistant Administrator for Management, AMS, and Joe Flannery, Extension Service.

I would like to introduce our officers. Our Vice-chairman is John Hamer of the Forest Service. John has been a very active Vice-chairman, as I was in New Orleans for 6 weeks. He served in my absence very ably. Bill Hillenbrand is the Chairman of our steering committee. Bill would you stand up and give us the names of the members of your committee. (Oneta Bear, FAS; Cathryn Glynn, FHA; Elmo Bryan, B&F; and Pete Doyle, OP&O. Serving ex-officio are the Chairman and Vice-chairman.)

At the head table we have Ernie Wylie, Chief of the Records Management Division, OP&O; Frank Mangham, Director of Plant and Operations; and, John Cooper, Director of Management Appraisal and Systems Development.

Our guest speaker today comes well qualified. He is the Deputy Assistant Archivist of the United States, an outstanding leader in paperwork management in the Government. He has a close working knowledge of the various specialties in paperwork management, and while he was in the Navy, he worked in many or most of these specialties. He has been an advisor to both Hoover Commissions, and under his leadership the National Archives and Records Service of the GSA has established a strong program. Many of you have participated in their workshops or used their workshops in your agencies. Of course, he has assisted the agencies in many other ways. He has appeared before the Records Management Council, our predecessor organization, many times and each time we have profited by his appearance. I would like to introduce now, Ev Alldredge.



Everett Alldredge  
National Archives and Records Service, GSA

I would like to congratulate you on establishing your Paperwork Management Council. I believe that you will be pleased with the effect it will generally have around town, as some of the other agencies copy what you have done.

USDA AS A RECORDS MANAGEMENT FOUNTAINHEAD

I sometimes think that an agency like your own underrates the way your admirable actions affect others in the Federal family. When I look at records management within the Federal Government, it seems to me that it has had three well-springs. There is one group of practitioners in town who got most of their training in Navy; another group got their start in Army. The third group stems from the Department of Agriculture. If you made a list of the persons who occupy the various records management jobs around town, I think you would find that most come from one of these three sources.

I think your Records Management Council had a good deal to do with your being one of the seminal three. It was your ability during council meetings to become acquainted with one another; to size one another up so that when people of other agencies asked, "Do you know a good man for such and such a job?" they got a certain unanimity of opinion as to what someone's capabilities were. Thus began the USDA exodus.

Terry Beach left to set up a program in the Public Health Service and later the Coast Guard. Bill Muller departed, to wind up in the Air Force when it was still part of the Army. Dot Luttrell bade you goodbye to help OPS and then Internal Revenue Service. Phil Richey, of course, said au revoir to go to Housing and Home Finance, and Tom Pugliese left for AEC. Bob Meehan and Ten Allsman went to Navy. Annette Blood left for FNMA. The internal program of GSA was set up, as most of you know, by Lin Donaldson and Ken Hoover and is still going along the lines they blueprinted for it. Don Simon, of course, is now over at State Department, and every time I go over there it seems that I see more and more Agriculture people. Then, in our own NARS shop, we have Bob Lando, Virginia Thatcher Williams, Paul Soules, Bill Harris, and Danny Ross, all of whom got their training in Agriculture. I am sure this brief catalogue omits many names, but my point has surely been made.

Good files maintenance has been a trade-mark of USDA, with its subject numeric system. It is now the largest single files system in the Federal Government. In 1940, there weren't more than two agencies other than Agriculture using that system. As a result of your ex-patriates, now

about three-fifths of the Federal Government have adopted it and I expect that sooner or later the rest will go that way.

The daddy of reports management in Navy was Ten Allsman from USDA. A lot of persons have copied the Navy system, which was well publicized, little realizing its real progenitor.

Phil Richey and some of his colleagues in the Department in the late 40's were called upon by the Bureau of the Budget to write "Simplifying Procedures Through Forms Control," which has probably been the most single influential book on forms that has been written. Every forms program in the Government, except Frank Knox's Navy Shop and Louis Rouse's Army system, has been modeled along the lines of the program which the USDA crew spelled out.

In the directives field, the work that Bill Harris, Fred Osgood, and Ernie Wylie have done has been germinative, too. We thought so highly of it, as you know, as to get Bill Harris away from you. Since then, Bill has installed the USDA system in Federal Aviation (with Fred Osgood directing the effort), in AID, and in the Bureau of Land Management, although the HEW, Navy, GSA, and Commerce systems are patterned after that of ASCS.

I would say a great deal of this influence that the Department of Agriculture has wielded has been as a result of your getting together and knowing what one another was doing. I doubt, for the most part, that the other agencies have done enough of this. When I was in the Navy, all the Records Officers of the Bureaus met once a month, and I still think that what we call the Navy system was helped by these periodic brain storming sessions of the senior practitioners. Every idea advanced got filtered through the minds of a good, down-to-earth company of pirates.

My guess is that most of the persons who were part of the Agriculture exodus, however, tended to leave between 1950-56. It seems to me in the last 4 or 5 years, the influence of Agriculture on the rest of the Government has diminished. There is a real possibility, with your Paperwork Management Council being brought into being, that Agriculture can muster the forces to bring a renaissance of its leadership.

#### HOW THE NEW COUNCIL CAN HELP

If you were to ask me how the Paperwork Management Council could lead to a renaissance, I would point to that portion of your by-laws dealing with Council objectives. I think you have a good statement of what you expect the Council to do. I would phrase it a little differently - not that my words would necessarily be an improvement on what you already said, but I just simply happen to think in somewhat different terms.

Rather rapidly, I have written down five ways in which the Council can be effective and helpful. Whether it turns out that in each of these respects

it is effective and as helpful as it might be, of course, will remain to be seen. Yet it will give you, or it can give you, the channels to accomplish these five things.

First, I think the Council can help you professionalize your work. The Paperwork Management profession is new as professions go. It is still in swaddling clothes. As we get further and further into the 20th Century, government as we know it is becoming more and more dependent on paperwork. Wrestling with this paperwork requires a professional if headway is to be forthcoming. We all define a profession about the same way--its hallmark is a body of doctrine. This body of doctrine encompasses the skills that people need to work with, the kinds of methodology and techniques they use, the kinds of practices that are recognized to be the best, and advocates service rather than gain as the goal of those having the professional knowledge. In order for a profession to emerge, a lot of doctrinal work has to be done. In the formulation of that doctrine, bringing it together into a cohesive whole, I believe the Paperwork Management Council can help.

Secondly, the Council might very well set some common goals. Actually, when paperwork management programs flounder, it is because realistic goals haven't been set for them, or they've had difficulty in arriving in some concrete fashion at precisely what their goals are. I hope that as you have subsequent meetings, you will address yourselves to this problem of common aims.

Thirdly, the Paperwork Management Council might very well help you develop standards to measure program effectiveness. Nearly everywhere people aver paperwork management is a good thing, but what does it accomplish? This in turn depends partly on the awareness that people have in knowing what to record and how to measure it. In this connection let me tell you a couple of stories. If I had a lot of time, I think I could tell you 25 or 30 stories, but perhaps a couple will suffice to illustrate the measuring of program effectiveness.

Government paperwork management very largely derives from the passage of the Federal Records Act of 1950. As early as 1952 a good many of you will recall that NARS asked every agency to give it an annual report on volume of records held, where these records were held, and the like. That very first report, figures as of June 30, 1952, showed about 25 million cubic feet of records in the Government occupying about 25 million square feet of space. Out of the 25 million square feet of space being occupied by records in 1952, 20 million were office space and about 5 million feet were various kinds of storage space.

As most of you know, we just completed another inventory for Fiscal Year 1962, exactly 10 years later. As of June 30, 1962, we had only slenderized down to the 24 million cubic feet mark, but we were now down to 13 million square feet of storage space. By using records center techniques, we have really compressed the amount of storage space needed for noncurrent files. The reduction of office space, so far as records occupying office space is concerned, from 20 million feet, in 1952, to 13 million feet in

1962 is saving the Public Buildings Service about 15 million dollars a year. In other words, Public Buildings would have to have that much more money in its budget this year if this compression hadn't taken place.

	<u>1952</u>	<u>1962</u>
Cubic Feet of Records on Hand	25,000,000	24,000,000
Square Feet of Office Space Occupied	20,000,000	13,000,000
Square Feet of Storage Space Occupied	5,000,000	4,000,000

This is one way of measuring program effectiveness--on a "before vs. after" basis. This requires keeping figures that can be compared. Such figures are often called "milestones" and need to be available for some length of time. It may not be a way that necessarily appeals to you, but it is something tangible.

My second closely related story is this. In 1951 the average life expectancy of a Federal record was 13 years. Oh sure, you kept a lot of records a hundred years, you kept a lot 50, you kept a lot 2, you kept a lot 5, but when you averaged all these out, it came to 13 years. In other words when a record was created, to use the language of biology, it could be expected to be on hand for about 13 years.

When we look at the 1962 inventory we have reduced the average life expectancy of a record to about 9 years. That means just this. You will recall I just told you that in 1952 we had about 25 million cubic feet of records in the Government. In 1962, having gone down only 1 million cubic feet, your first unthinking reaction might be, "We haven't done very well, have we?"

That would be to forget all the records created between 1952 and 1962--45 million feet or so. Yet, clearly, 45 million cubic feet were also destroyed between 1952 and 1962, otherwise our 24 million cubic feet on hand would not have remained fairly constant. This was, therefore, quite an achievement.

Helping make this achievement possible was a reduction in life expectancy of a Government record--down to 9 years from the old 13. I am convinced that we can continue to nibble at that figure until we get down to a 7 year average. This is program effectiveness, measured for all to see. It should help convince any doubters that records management pays. Consider the space jam we would be in today if only 25 million cubic feet had been destroyed out of the 45 million cubic feet created between 1952 and 1962. This kind of tangible accomplishment merits public support.

Fourthly, the Council might help you improve the understanding of your superiors as to what Paperwork Management is. I hope that as you have your meetings, you will find it possible to bring in persons like we have here today, Mr. Robertson, Mr. Cooper, Mr. Mangham and Mr. Herrell.

Persons of this administrative stature want to realize what we are up to. They are people used to making up their own minds. They need to decide whether what we are doing is worthwhile and to what extend it deserves their support. A council of this kind can help such persons get a better awareness and comprehension of what our aims and plans are and the extent to which they ought to sustain them with their support.

Otis Beasley, the Assistant Secretary of Administration at Interior, dwelt on this problem in another context not long ago when he said:

"Let me make one point clear, I am not suggesting for a moment that any responsible Department or Agency head, regardless of the administration with which he is identified, is actively or consciously opposed to administrative management or the objective for which it stands. What so often happens, however, is that there is such preoccupation with program changes and such a high degree of sensitivity to the political barometer that the leaders do not have either the time or the inclination to give the full degree of audible and effective support which is essential to administrative management.

"The most customary loss of continuity which can be attributed to leadership is the 'take-for-granted' attitude. This is characterized by the absence of affirmative support. It leads to cynicism punctuated with the belief that administrative management is just a necessary evil. This apathy toward administrative goals not only arrests progress; it also stimulates a tendency of lower echelon program personnel to blame the lack of progress in their own endeavors upon what they like to describe as administrative red tape.

"Even if there is merely an attitude of disinterest, the damage to administration is substantial."

Fifthly, your Council will want to consider how do you best train practitioners. I think all of us realize that paperwork management is expanding in front of our very eyes. Those of us who were plodding our way in 1951, if someone had come up behind us and said "Source Data Automation," we could only have asked, "What's that?" Well, we have had to learn what it was, haven't we? Indeed, we've had to learn it well enough so that we can recognize a source data application when we see it. This new knowledge only came to us through training.

Consider the forms area. Those who were in the forms business in 1951 knew a few types of speciality forms, but today as near as I can tell, about 75% of the printing cost of forms is in the specialty area. In 1951 less than 20% of our printing bill was going into speciality forms. The forms analysts have simply had to keep up with the new forms making machines coming on the market and the impact of automation on developing speciality forms. How can this be done except through training--albeit

self-training. How well does your wonderful Graduate School offer courses that are germane to this field?

In the last two years our NARS staff working on a Files Improvement Workshop have found how little they agreed on some of the basics. We have been running an internal school to clear up these differences. It has forced us into a reading and studying program that transcended anything we had planned in the beginning. If our experts (they were yours) needed this education, how many more need it?

My interest in reports management dates from helping Navy get a program off the launching pad in 1949. That program emphasized reports pricing, reports registration to diminish content overlap and duplication, and finally reduction in frequency of submission. As a reports program this concept is no longer adequate. Communications management and information management have come onto the scene, changing reporting philosophy drastically. Where is the training coming from to explain this?

As I recently said at an IRAC meeting, I do know this--the paperwork management programs which do well are the programs which constantly provide for the training of their personnel. They are always making it possible for the staff to keep up to date with the new equipment coming on the market and the new techniques that develop. For example, what does operations research have to say to the paperwork management analyst? The behavioural sciences? The management sciences? Surely one of the things you can look forward to from this Council is some better ways of training your principal practitioners.

#### WHAT PAPERWORK PERSONNEL HAVE IN COMMON

The next question I would like to ask, and try to answer, is this: Do we really need to cooperate in this area? Aren't records disposition, files maintenance, mail management, forms, reports, correspondence and directives sufficiently different that they should go their separate ways? What do we gain, if anything, by uniting? Is there anything really that does unite us? Is there any common substratum of doctrine that we have?

It seems to me that our failure to realize what we have in common in many offices has weakened the improvement impact of paperwork management on office practices. I would like therefore to list very rapidly what some of the things we have in common are.

The first thing is an inventory of information. All of us operate from an inventory. The files analyst wants a listing of subjects. The records disposal analyst wants an inventory of all records by series. The forms analyst wants an inventory of all forms--every single one. The reports manager operates from an inventory--a list of every periodically submitted report. Your correspondence people want an inventory. It's usually a sampling, but nevertheless it still constitutes an inventory. Your directives people want an inventory. They want to know every kind of directive that is being issued and in what systematic fashion it's being issued.

These inventories turn out to be itemized paperwork, each from a different angle. One is a profile view, one is an x-ray, one is an aerial shot. Thus, while we are analyzing these inventories, we are simply looking at the same body of information with different pairs of eyes. What these different pairs of eyes see need to be shared. We will be surprised how the data dovetails, intertwines, and overlaps.

Another thing we have in common is classification doctrine. What do we do with our various inventories? First we have to organize the data. This organization has to take a comprehensible form, be logical, for us to use it. Our records inventories are organized in such a way, usually functionally, so that the records can be scheduled. We all realize that files are almost completely unuseable unless they are organized. In USDA your classification system is the subject-numeric, a hierarchical arrangement that goes from the concrete to the more specific to the more specific.

In order to use the forms inventory the analyst seeks entry into it on a "functional" basis. We have already said the records schedules are usually organized on "functional" basis. Are the records and forms analyst really talking about the same thing?

The directives analyst has to be classification oriented. How does he organize knowledge for retrieval? The librarians do it one way; we records and directives people have to do it another way. It's inconceivable to me that as we try to master the techniques of classification, that the forms analyst can't learn something from the directives analyst and the directives analyst can't learn something from the files analyst, and so on. As a matter of fact, a good many of us are beginning to suspect that probably one master classification system for every agency might be the answer to the present disparate, discreet classification systems that each agency has. Some agencies have as many as thirty-five or forty classification systems in their paperwork mosaics. In so far as I know anything about Agriculture, I have the impression that Forest Service is working toward a master system.

Classification theory comes close to constituting our hard professional core. We are in good company. Some of the best minds that have ever lived, have been primarily concerned with the classification of knowledge. Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher was one of the first persons who tried to segment all knowledge into little pieces that could be grasped and worked with. In more modern times, we have seen science unable to come into its own until it had worked out classification schema for biology, botany, chemistry, and physics. In library science we have had Dewey, Bliss, and Cutter. In information retrieval we have had Ranganathan, Vickery, Kent, Luhn, Bernier, Bar-Hillel, Mooers, and Fairthorne, to name some of the leaders who are taking a "new look" at hierarchical classification.

We have come to understand the shortcomings of a hierarchical system in terms of slowness, in terms of the extent to which current cross-referencing

techniques are too costly, in terms of its ability to produce documents rather than information. The impact that this has had on classification theory has not yet begun to subside; thereore the eventual impact it will have on us is too early to predict.

The third thing we have in common is procedural analysis. All of us have realized that if paperwork management has any internal rationale it is the way paperwork turns out to be the backbone of our procedures. You can't show me a procedure that isn't held together by the paperwork it generates. Usually to penetrate into a procedure, you've got to understand the paperwork that gives it whatever vitality or life that it has. In other words, to comprehend a directive, you've got to understand how it propels a procedure into being, or alters its course. In order to appraise a report, what data does it up-end to flesh out what procedure? So what procedural analysis is and how you perform it is certainly something that we have in common. Throughout this discussion I am using the classical definition of a procedure--a method is the way a person performs work; a procedure is a grouping of methods; a system is a grouping of procedures.

Records management is the offspring of a marriage of two highly useful disciplines--the industrial engineer and the archivist. Neither had ever worked in the office, but in the very late 1930's some very unusual people saw how the doctrine of these professions logically extended to the office. Procedural analysis came from the industrial engineering side of family--from Taylor, Gantt, and Gilbreth. Gantt taught us how to chart, Taylor to segment and itemize, and Gilbreth how to select measurable units of work. The marriage in its first days did not work too well, but 20 years of living together in the same ideological house has produced stability of concepts, of which procedural analysis is the finest of the first fruits.

Still another thing that we have in common is our conception of paperwork as data flow. How do we perceive data flow? How do we describe it? What are the best ways to chart it? What are some of the best ways of thrusting one's self inside of it and seeing it move? As I look at data flow, I'm reminded of six propositions that have become a charter for all of us. Let me see if I can state those propositions succinctly:

1. The average executive gets more data about his organization than he has time to use.
2. He gets considerable data that he does not know how to use.
3. He gets some data that is dangerous to use.
4. He gets considerable data that is useless.
5. He gets some data too late to use it.
6. He fails to get some of the data he really needs.

All of this is comprehended in data flow. It's these kinds of problems that you and I were brought into existence to help solve. We help solve them by a new circuitry, by pointing out what the possibilities of rearrangement are, what the possibilities of new origination are, what the possibilities of combination are. Since our professional fascination for data flow is held in common, surely when forms, directives, correspondence, files, reports, records disposal, and mail analysts get together, this gives us a very real link and we ought to make the most of it.

The final thing that we have in common is an overriding concern for management efficiency. Quality control and cost reduction enter here. Of course, we have this in common with a lot of other people. We have no monopoly on this at all.

I have doubts if there is sufficient realization, however, that for us to function well in this area, we require relatively unfettered time. A forms person can't orient himself sufficiently in this direction if all he is doing is processing the design work that is coming across the counter every day. The records person can't work well in this area if the daily job of processing transfers to a Center, handling requests for disposal and the like, take all his time. As staff personnel, we need time to pull ourselves off the firing line for several months to study a problem which may turn out to consist of a number of procedures, and contain a number of criss-crossing data-flow lines.

These circumstances prevail in operational areas in which problems are known to exist, such as backlogs, bottlenecks, unusual timelogs, excessive volume, repetition, or numerous errors. A great many paperwork offices put this kind of work on a project basis. This helps to pin down the scope of the work, highlight its nature, help keep tab on the progress made, and, when completed, aids in reporting what was done. Projects additionally furnish a springboard from which an analyst can initiate broad studies of functions or routines.

Here, I feel like apologizing. For, in addressing an agency which has developed the Management Improvement Project System, who am I to talk of projects? Secretary Freeman in his Memorandum No. 1514 said, "of equal importance to the identification of management projects is the careful evaluation of costs involved in conducting the study and the benefits to be derived." None of us could dissent from this, except this usually isn't our problem in showing our concern for management efficiency. Our problem is to get sprung loose from our over-the-counter business.

In conclusion, I am not here to glorify "togetherness," or talk about cooperation in the abstract. Working together on any worthy enterprise produces good morale, a healthy frame of mind, that can be reflected in our daily work and in our contacts with others. I do contend our enterprise is worthy; I do contend that reports, forms, correspondence, files (including equipment and supplies), directives, records disposition, mail,

information retrieval, and clerical quality control have enough commonality, enough similarity in technology and methodology, to challenge our willingness to work cooperatively, and to make imperative a greater awareness of what each speciality is doing. Finally, I do contend that cooperation will lead to new insights, to greater productivity, to increased usefulness. To me, this is sufficient reward to you to get the council going, with a "full steam ahead" command from the skipper.

Thank you for inviting me to your first meeting.

